



Islamic Education Teachers as Agents of Religious Character Formation in Schools: A Conceptual and Empirical Study

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Abstract:

Schools in Riau face a gap between religious routines and moral conduct, as recurring violence involving students shows. This article examines how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers can act as agents of religious character formation and where their role meets its limits. It uses qualitative library research with document analysis. The data consist of Qur'anic verses, *hadith*, classical and contemporary scholarship, peer reviewed studies from 2016 to 2026, official data on violence against children in Riau for 2023 to 2025, and two school cases reported in Riau in 2025. The analysis yields four teacher functions: exemplar (*qudwah*), formation of *adab* through habit (*ta'dib*), counsel (*mau'izah*), and gentle correction (*rifq*). Studies in Riau link teacher example and congregational prayer habits to students' religious attitudes. Yet the official data and the two cases show that ritual participation does not by itself prevent harm, especially when schools respond slowly or settle cases informally. The article contributes a contextual rereading of classical texts against current child protection rules and proposes that religious character formation should combine modeling, habit, counsel, and restorative correction within a schoolwide system.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Schools are expected to raise students who are both capable and good. Indonesian policy says so plainly. The national education law lists faith, piety, and noble character among the aims of education (Republik Indonesia, 2003), and the Strengthening Character Education policy places religious character first among its five main values (Republik Indonesia, 2017). Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*, PAI) teachers stand at the center of this expectation. Parents, principals, and communities often look to them first when students misbehave.

The expectation meets a hard reality in Riau. The provincial child protection office recorded 833, 951, and 881 cases of violence against children in 2023, 2024, and 2025 (Dinas P3AP2KB

Provinsi Riau, 2026). These figures cover all settings, so they are not school data. Still, two school related cases in 2025 drew wide public attention. An eight year old second grader in Indragiri Hulu died after reported bullying by older schoolmates (Antara, 2025; Tempo, 2025). A senior high school student in Pekanbaru was reportedly beaten by a group of peers and needed surgery (Riauaktual, 2025). Both cases raise a sober question. What can a PAI teacher realistically do to form religious character, and where does that role end?

Classical Muslim scholars gave this question serious thought. Character (*khuluq*) was defined as a settled state of the soul from which actions flow easily, without long deliberation (Al Ghazali, n.d.; Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Because the state is settled through repeated practice, it can also be reshaped through training. This is why both scholars gave the educator a central place. Al Ghazali compared the teacher to a father who guides a child toward lasting welfare, and he warned that a teacher's words lose force when his conduct contradicts them (Al Ghazali, n.d.). Ibn Khaldun cautioned that harsh treatment of students breeds evasion and deceit rather than virtue (Ibn Khaldun, 1958).

Modern character education reaches a similar view from another direction. Character is often described as knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 1991). Social learning theory adds that people learn moral conduct largely by watching models they respect (Bandura, 1977). Character is also said to be taught, caught, and sought, and the "caught" part depends on the adults children see every day (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse, & Wright, 2017). Recent work sharpens the point. Models persuade more when students see them as attainable rather than distant heroes (Han, Kim, Jeong, & Cohen, 2017), and children's character virtues change with the quality of classroom relationships (Thomas, Cunha, & Santo, 2022).

Empirical studies in Indonesia largely confirm the teacher's importance. A correlational study of junior high school students in Kuantan Singingi, Riau, found that teacher example and the habit of congregational prayer were each significantly related to students' religious attitudes (Andani, 2023). A qualitative study at an elementary school in Pekanbaru described PAI teachers modeling discipline, polite speech, and social care while leading Qur'an recitation and congregational prayer (Mashadi, 2025). A recent multi site study of elementary schools reported that Islamic habituation was followed by lower verbal aggression and that teacher competence decided whether programs worked (Ulum, Astutik, Rahayu, Putra, & Zaini, 2026). Studies abroad point the same way. Religious education teachers in England, interviewed in a qualitative study, treated character education as part of their role (Metcalf & Moulin-Stožek, 2021). Muslim educators in a Canadian mosque school draw partly on relational and participatory pedagogies from the Qur'an and Sunnah (Alkouatli, 2018). Nationally, reviews show that character education in Indonesian schools follows government policy, with Islamic schools adding an orientation toward *akhlaq al karimah* (Susilo, Dewantoro, & Yuningsih, 2022).

This article asks three questions. First, how do the Qur'an, *hadith*, and classical and contemporary scholars describe the teacher's role in forming religious character? Second, what does empirical evidence, especially from Riau, show about how PAI teachers perform that role? Third, what do Riau's official data and recent school cases imply about the limits of the role, and what framework follows? Accordingly, the article aims to (1) set out the textual and scholarly foundations of the teacher's role with concrete school examples, (2) synthesize empirical evidence on PAI teachers and religious character, and (3) propose a framework that is tested against Riau data and cases.

Research Gap and Novelty

Three gaps remain in the literature reviewed here. First, most studies describe what PAI teachers do, usually as a list of exemplary conduct and habituation in one school. They seldom trace these practices back to the primary texts and to the classical debate on how character is formed, so the concepts stay thin. Second, few studies face evidence of harm. Research on religious character tends to report progress in ritual and attitude, while official data and public cases of student violence are treated as a separate topic. The link between the two is rarely examined. Third, Riau is under studied. The available Riau studies are single site, and the reviewed literature does not bring provincial data and recent cases into conversation with the Islamic educational tradition.

This article offers three points of novelty. First, it rereads classical concepts, especially *uswah hasanah*, *ta'dib*, and *rifq*, against current child protection rules, so that old texts speak to present classroom decisions. In particular, it reads *uswah hasanah* through the idea of the attainable exemplar, so that the teacher is a reachable bridge to the prophetic model and not a replacement for it. Second, it places official Riau data and two documented 2025 cases beside empirical findings on religious character, which exposes the limits of ritual based approaches. Third, it proposes an integrative framework of four teacher functions, namely exemplar, formation of *adab*, counsel, and gentle correction, set inside a schoolwide system rather than left to one teacher.



Method (منهج)

Research Design

This study uses qualitative library research combined with document analysis. It is conceptual because it builds an argument from textual sources. It is empirical in a limited sense because it also analyzes published empirical findings, official data, and documented cases. It does not report new interviews or observations. No human participants took part, so there are no participant characteristics to report.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Four sets of sources were used. The first is primary Islamic texts: Qur'anic verses with their exegesis, and *hadith* from the major collections. The second is classical and contemporary works on Islamic education and character. The third is peer reviewed articles, mostly from 2016 to 2026, identified through scholarly databases and journal websites with keywords such as PAI teacher, religious character, role model, and bullying. Articles were kept if they addressed the teacher's role in character or moral formation and stated their methods. The fourth is Riau data: figures from the provincial child protection office for 2023 to 2025, and news reports on school cases.

Cases were chosen by four criteria. They had to occur in Riau, be tied to a school setting, fall in 2025 so that they match the current policy context, and be reported by at least two independent outlets or an official source. Two cases met these criteria. Two checks protected relevance and timing. The official figures cover violence against children in all settings, so they serve as background and not as school data. Both cases involve students of school age, which matches the article's focus. Where reports disagreed, only facts common to the sources were used.

Analysis and Trustworthiness

Analysis followed the steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006): reading the sources, coding, grouping codes into themes, and reviewing themes against the sources. Themes from the texts were then compared with the empirical findings and the Riau cases. Trustworthiness rested on source triangulation, on citing primary texts directly, and on flagging

uncertain details in news reports. Minors are not named. The cases are treated as allegations as reported at the time of publication, and court outcomes were not traced.

نتائج ومناقشة | Results and Discussion

The analysis produced four teacher functions and one systemic condition. The sections below present the textual foundations, the empirical evidence, the Riau data and cases, and finally the integrative framework.

The Teacher as Exemplar (Uswah Hasanah)

The clearest textual basis is Q.S. Al Ahzab: 21.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Indeed, in the Messenger of God you have an excellent example (*uswah hasanah*) for whoever hopes for God and the Last Day and remembers God often.” (Q.S. Al Ahzab: 21)

Ibn Kathir read this verse as a great principle of following the Prophet in his words, deeds, and states (Ibn Kathir, 1999), and Shihab explains *uswah* as an example that others can follow in conduct (Shihab, 2002). The verse does not make the teacher a replacement for the Prophet. It shows that education works through a living pattern of conduct that others can copy. Aisha’s reply that the Prophet’s character was the Qur’an (Muslim, n.d., no. 746) ties the model to the revealed text. The Qur’an also warns against a gap between speech and deed.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

“O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do?” (Q.S. As Saff: 2)

Al Ghazali made the same point for teachers with an image: a crooked stick cannot cast a straight shadow (Al Ghazali, n.d.). In a school, the exemplar is measured in small acts. A PAI teacher who reaches the prayer hall before the call to prayer, stands in the first row, greets students by name, and apologizes when late teaches punctuality, humility, and sincerity without a lecture. A Pekanbaru study reports this kind of modeling in religious behavior, discipline, polite speech, and social care (Mashadi, 2025).

Modern psychology adds a caution. Moral exemplars motivate more when students see them as attainable and relevant (Han et al., 2017). The Prophet is the highest model, yet a student may feel the distance is too great. The teacher becomes a visible, imperfect, and reachable bridge. A teacher who admits a mistake in front of the class and repairs it shows students what a believer does when he or she falls short. This reading keeps the prophetic ideal intact and explains why honesty matters more than perfection.

Tarbiyah, Ta’lim, and Ta’dib: What Kind of Teacher?

Three Arabic terms are used for education, and each highlights a different teacher role. *Tarbiyah* shares its root with the verb in Q.S. Al Isra: 24 and points to nurturing growth step by step.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

“And say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them as they raised me when I was small.’” (Q.S. Al Isra: 24)

Ta'lim stresses the transfer of knowledge. *Ta'dib*, the term preferred by Al Attas, stresses instilling *adab*, the right recognition of the proper place of things, people, and God (Al Attas, 1980). Halstead shows that the three terms overlap in emphasis (Halstead, 2004), and recent scholarship links *tarbiyah* to human flourishing (Alkouatli, 2018). A PAI teacher needs all three. In a lesson on prayer, *ta'lim* explains the steps of ablution. *Tarbiyah* notices that a shy sixth grader needs encouragement before leading a short recitation. *Ta'dib* shows in how the teacher expects students to enter the prayer hall: quietly, in order, and with respect for those already praying. Without *ta'dib*, students may know the rules yet treat the hall as a playground.

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong in the Classroom

The duty to enjoin *ma'ruf* and forbid *munkar* is often invoked in schools, so its textual limits matter.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

"Let there be among you a community who invite to good, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. They are the successful." (Q.S. Ali Imran: 104)

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ

"Whoever among you sees a wrong, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot, then with his tongue. If he cannot, then with his heart, and that is the weakest of faith." (Muslim, n.d., no. 49)

The *hadith* speaks of stages and of capacity. Al Ghazali attached conditions to the duty, including knowledge, piety, and good character (Al Ghazali, n.d.). In a school, a teacher's capacity is words, guidance, and procedure, not force. The method is stated in Q.S. An Nahl: 125.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel." (Q.S. An Nahl: 125)

Consider two students who fight in the corridor. The teacher separates them calmly, listens to both, and verifies before judging (*tabayyun*; Q.S. Al Hujurat: 6). Private counsel (*mau'izah hasanah*) follows: what happened, who was hurt, and what can be repaired. An apology, the return of something taken, or help with a task can be the repair. The teacher then informs the homeroom teacher and, where needed, the school's violence prevention team. National rules require every school to have such a team and clear procedures (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi [Kemendikbudristek], 2023). A PAI teacher who follows this route acts within both religious and legal duties. The child is corrected, not humiliated.

Habit and Counsel: Building Character through Repetition

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا

"And enjoin prayer upon your family, and be steadfast in it." (Q.S. Thaha: 132)

مُرُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ أَبْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ

"Instruct your children to pray when they are seven years old." (Abu Dawud, n.d., no. 495)

The verse pairs a command with patience, which admits that habit takes time. Ibn Miskawayh held that the young are shaped through habit and instruction (Ibn Miskawayh, 1968). Ulwan lists example, habit, advice, supervision, and correction as pillars of educating children (Ulwan, 1999), and Al Nahlawi lists similar methods, including example, practice, and admonition (Al Nahlawi, 1979). In school this becomes daily *dhuha* or *dhuhr* congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation before class, greeting, queuing, and care for the prayer hall. A patient teacher pairs a reluctant student with a friend, asks about obstacles such as fear of mistakes in ablution or a difficult home, and praises effort. Riau evidence supports the value of this routine: prayer habit was significantly related to students' religious attitudes (Andani, 2023).

Habit matters only if it stays tied to meaning. The Qur'an says prayer restrains from indecency and wrong (Q.S. Al Ankabut: 45). Where the prayer is performed but the restraint is missing, the teacher has a further task, which is to connect the prayer hall to the corridor. The same *hadith* on prayer mentions a firmer step at age ten. Whatever its classical interpretation, current Indonesian rules ban violence in schools (Kemendikbudristek, 2023), and Ibn Khaldun himself warned that severity harms students (Ibn Khaldun, 1958).

Gentleness (*Rifq*) and the Warning against Harshness

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

"It was by God's mercy that you were gentle with them. Had you been harsh and hard of heart, they would have dispersed from around you." (Q.S. Ali Imran: 159)

إِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَا يَكُونُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ، وَلَا يُنْزَعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ

"Gentleness is not found in anything except that it adorns it, and it is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it." (Muslim, n.d., no. 2594)

Ibn Khaldun argued that students raised under severity become lazy, deceitful, and prone to hide their real character (Ibn Khaldun, 1958). For a PAI teacher handling a student who bullies, gentleness does not mean weakness. It means firm boundaries delivered without contempt. The student must hear that the act was wrong and that he or she can still become a good person. Public shaming or a slap teaches fear, and fear produces concealment, which is the very outcome Ibn Khaldun described. Table 1 summarizes the four functions.

Table 1. Four teacher functions, their textual basis, and school practice

No	Teacher function	Textual and scholarly basis	Concrete school practice
1	Exemplar (<i>qudwah</i>)	Q.S. Al Ahzab: 21; Q.S. As Saff: 2; Al Ghazali on the crooked stick	Arrives early to the prayer hall, greets students by name, admits and repairs own mistakes
2	Formation of <i>adab</i> (<i>ta'dib</i>)	Q.S. Thaha: 132; Abu Dawud no. 495; Ibn Miskawayh; Al Attas	Daily <i>dhuha</i> or <i>dhuhr</i> prayer, Qur'an recitation, queuing, care for the prayer hall, patient pairing of reluctant students
3	Counsel (<i>mau'izah</i>)	Q.S. An Nahl: 125; Q.S. Ali Imran: 104; Muslim no. 49	Private talk after conflict: what happened, who was hurt, what can be repaired
4	Gentle correction (<i>rifq</i>)	Q.S. Ali Imran: 159; Muslim no. 2594; Ibn Khaldun	Firm limits without shaming or violence, apology and repair, referral to the violence prevention team

Empirical Evidence from Riau and Beyond

Local evidence supports the first and third functions. In Kuantan Singingi, teacher example correlated with students' religious attitudes at 0.466 and congregational prayer habit at 0.526, and together they were reported to explain 72.8 percent of the variation (Andani, 2023). The last figure is high relative to the two separate correlations, so it should be treated with caution until

replicated. The Pekanbaru elementary school study reached a compatible conclusion through interviews and observation (Mashadi, 2025). Together the two studies show a consistent Riau pattern: religious attitude is stronger where teachers model conduct and where prayer and recitation are routine.

Two limits stand out. Both studies measure religious attitude or practice, not conduct toward others, so they cannot show whether routine prayer reduces harm to peers. The quantitative design also shows association, not cause. Evidence that habituation can reach conduct comes from a multi site elementary study, where Islamic habituation was followed by consistently lower verbal aggression and where teacher competence decided success (Ulum et al., 2026). Outside Indonesia, children's character virtues were found to change with the quality of classroom relationships (Thomas, Cunha, & Santo, 2022), which supports the stress on relational and gentle correction. The *pesantren* offers a useful contrast. In one modern *pesantren*, a twenty four hour system and the cultivation of *adab* were identified as the keys to character formation (Mujahid, 2021). A day school has only a few hours, so the PAI teacher's effect depends heavily on how far the rest of the school supports the same values.

Riau Data and Cases: Where Ritual Meets Reality

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the official Riau figures. Two features matter here. The total moved little across three years, peaking at 951 cases in 2024 and falling only to 881 in 2025, so there is no sign of a durable decline. Physical and psychological violence together account for 967 of the 2,665 cases, or 36 percent. These are the categories in which bullying and harsh discipline would be recorded, although the reports available to this study do not break the figures down by setting.

Table 2. Recorded cases of violence against children in Riau, 2023 to 2025

No	Type of violence	2023	2024	2025	Total
1	Physical	135	142	131	408
2	Psychological	197	193	169	559
3	Sexual	572	572	547	1,691
4	All types recorded	833	951	881	2,665

Note. Data from Dinas P3AP2KB Provinsi Riau (2026). The total includes exploitation, neglect, trafficking, and other categories.

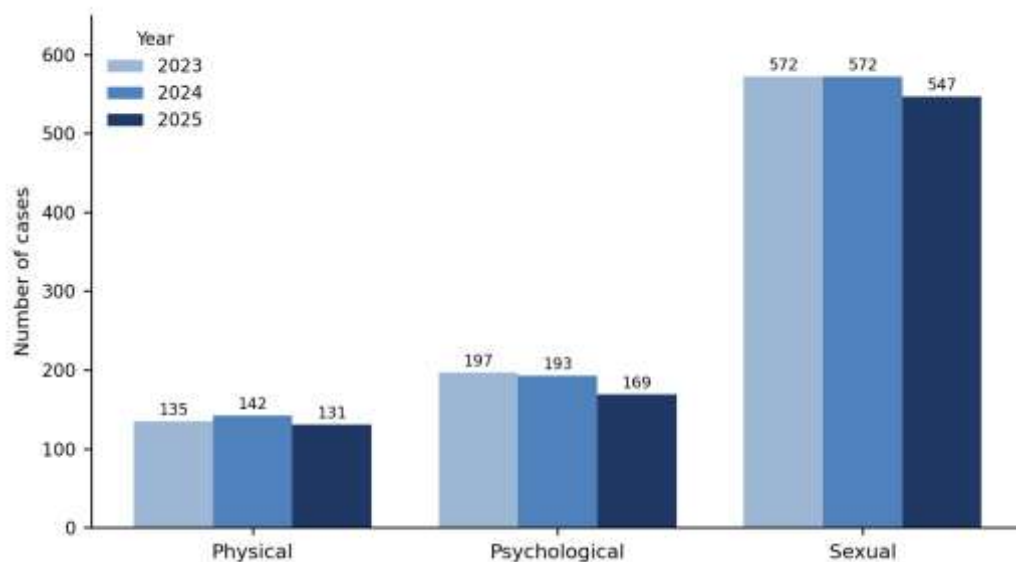


Figure 1. Recorded physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children in Riau, 2023 to 2025

Case 1: A fatal bullying report in Indragiri Hulu, May 2025. Reports say an eight year old second grader at a public elementary school in Seberida sub district died on 26 May 2025 after being hurt at school by older schoolmates (Antara, 2025; Tempo, 2025). Police said about twenty people had been questioned and an autopsy had been done (Antara, 2025). A police release cited by a national outlet described bruising consistent with blunt force and said the alleged perpetrators were under twelve (Tempo, 2025). Accounts differ on the dates of the first assault. A school mediation with the parents of four alleged perpetrators took place days before the death, and the principal reportedly confirmed that bullying had occurred (Tribunnews, 2025).

The reports do not say what role PAI teachers played, so no judgment about their performance is drawn. The case is read as a test of the framework. The alleged perpetrators were primary school children, an age at which habit and imitation matter most, and the daily arena for the four functions is the small aggression of pushing, teasing, and taking things. The response after the harm came to light also matters. The reports describe a mediation at which older students admitted the act, and the victim died five days later (Tribunnews, 2025). The sequence suggests that informal mediation did not amount to protection. This is a failure of a system more than of one teacher, yet it shows what gentle correction requires: early, documented action linked to a formal handling team.

Case 2: A group assault at a Pekanbaru senior high school, September 2025. A parent reported that on 15 September 2025 her son was hit with a thrown pen, pushed to the ground, and then challenged to a fight on a nearby street, where a group attacked him and he needed surgery. She said the school only asked about his condition by WhatsApp, and the family went to the police. The outlet's headline states that the provincial education office asked for a family based settlement (*kekeluargaan*), and the school had not given an official statement when the report was published (Riauaktual, 2025).

Here the alleged perpetrators were adolescents. The escalation from a thrown pen to a push to a challenge outside the school gate is a chain of small acts, each an opening for adult intervention. It also shows why gentle correction must not become silence. When a school responds with distance or informal settlement, students may learn that harm has few consequences and that reporting is futile. Both the Islamic demand for justice and the warning against harshness are then ignored. Because the parent's account is one side of the story, this reading is offered as an interpretation of the reported sequence, not as a finding about the school.

Across the data a tension appears. Studies of religious character report links between teacher example, prayer habits, and religious attitudes. Riau data and cases report persistent harm among students. The two are not contradictory. Ritual participation and religious attitude measure one thing, and conduct toward peers is another. Q.S. Al Ankabut: 45 links prayer to restraint, but the link needs a bridge between prayer hall and corridor. The PAI teacher is one builder of that bridge and cannot be the only one. The tradition itself spreads responsibility widely.

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock." (Al Bukhari, 2001, no. 893; Muslim, n.d., no. 1829)

An Integrative Framework and Its Implications

The findings support a framework of four teacher functions inside three school conditions. The functions are exemplar (*qudwah*), formation of *adab* through habit (*ta'dib*), counsel (*mau'izah*), and gentle correction (*rifq*). The conditions are a shared culture in which all adults, not only PAI

teachers, model the same values, clear procedures with a functioning violence prevention team, and a working partnership with parents. The prophetic saying that the Prophet was sent to perfect noble character (Al Bayhaqi, 2003; Ahmad, 2001, no. 8952) fits this design, since perfecting character is a long task shared by many hands.

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

"I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Al Bayhaqi, 2003; the Ahmad version reads *salih al akhlaq*)

Four implications follow for Riau. First, teacher training should include gentle correction, *tabayyun*, and restorative dialogue, since teacher competence decided program success in one recent study (Ulum et al., 2026). Second, PAI teachers should be formally linked to the school's violence prevention team, so that counsel and procedure reinforce each other (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Third, assessment of religious character should add indicators of conduct, such as how students treat younger peers, and not only attendance at prayer. Fourth, teachers should use their own repaired mistakes as attainable examples for students (Han et al., 2017). None of these steps replaces the wider responsibility of principals, education offices, and parents.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This article asked how PAI teachers can act as agents of religious character formation and where the role reaches its limits. The textual and scholarly sources point to four functions: exemplar, formation of *adab* through habit, counsel, and gentle correction. Studies in Riau link teacher example and prayer habits to students' religious attitudes. Official data and two 2025 cases show that harm among students persists, and that ritual participation is necessary but not sufficient. Religious character formation therefore needs a schoolwide system in which the PAI teacher is a central but not a solitary agent.

The novelty of the article lies in three moves: reading *uswah hasanah* as an attainable exemplar, reading *rifq* against present child protection rules, and setting Riau data and cases beside the literature on religious character. These moves add a contextual reading of familiar concepts and a framework that can be tested.

Recommendations

School principals and education offices in Riau should link PAI teachers to violence prevention teams and provide training in gentle correction and restorative dialogue. PAI teachers should keep prayer and recitation routines connected to daily conduct toward peers. Researchers should test the framework with observation and interviews in Riau schools and should measure the relation between habituation and conduct toward peers. This study has limits. It uses no primary field data, the official figures are not specific to schools, the two cases are reported allegations, and their legal outcomes were not traced.

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